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ABSTRACT

Recent federal and state laws and regulations mandate new and increased services for handicapped students served by local school districts and educational service agencies. Public Law 94-142 requires that free appropriate educational programs be provided for all handicapped children. To react appropriately to both federal and state mandates and to meet the demand for new and changing programs, local education agencies must initiate effective planning for implementation of full services for handicapped students. The model described in this speech, Team-Management Decision-Making for Educators and Administrators to Meet Special Education Mandates (TEAMS), is currently being utilized in over 40 districts in four states. Outlined in this speech are characteristics of groups that should be represented on the local planning TEAM, and procedures for developing a full service delivery system. (Author/MLF)

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A Full Service Model for Implementing PL 94-142

A TEAM Planning Approach*

by

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Participatory Planning

Programs in education in general and special education in particular are becoming increasingly complex. Recent federal and state laws and regulations mandate new and increased services for handicapped students served by local school districts and educational service agencies. Public Law 94-142 requires

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*This model is currently being utilized by Project TEAMS in over forty districts in four states and is based on the Prince William Model developed by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. Project TEAMS (Team-management decision-making for Educators and Administrators to Meet Special education mandates) is jointly sponsored by the American Association of School Administrators and the National Association of Elementary School Principals and is funded by the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and the Office for Civil Rights.

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that free appropriate educational programs be provided for all handicapped children between the ages of 3 and 21. Many state laws and regulations not only support this federal law, but require additional programs and services for handicapped students.

To react appropriately to both Federal and State mandates and to meet the demand for new and changing programs, Local Education Agencies must initiate effective planning for implementation of Full Services. While the actual size of a local planning TEAM will be dependent upon the size of the educational agency and may range from a few well chosen individuals to a group of fifty or more, the following role types should be considered for inclusion:

- superintendent or designee
- board members
- regular and special education instructional supervisors
- principals
- special and regular education teachers
- parents
- handicapped individuals or groups representing the handicapped
- representatives of other community agencies providing services to the handicapped

Participation should be on a voluntary basis and each participant should understand what is expected in terms of time commitments and involvement in the process. In the selection of participants, it is important to involve individuals who are: (a) Representative of those role groups in the community who are responsible for or affected by the delivery of special education services, (b) Interested in and supportive of providing handicapped children with a "free appropriate public education," and (c) Capable of assuming

leadership roles in implementing the Full Service plan to be developed. (An equal balance of regular and special education administrative and instructional staff is suggested.)

Advantages and Disadvantages of Participatory Planning

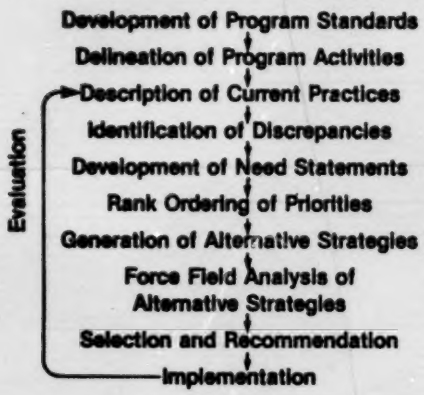
The use of Participatory Planning TEAM may be initially perceived to be costly in terms of time and resources. However, it should return dividends by providing efficient planning for Full Services implementation. Differences of opinion obviously will be found among members of the planning TEAM, and varying views will be expressed regarding: (1) What services should be delivered, (2) The adequacy of existing program elements, (3) The personnel and time commitments needed to deliver and supervise services, and (4) Priorities for the use of local resources to implement PL 94-142. These differences of opinion are best resolved in the planning process. A Full Service plan that results from interdisciplinary planning has a much greater chance for funding and implementation than a plan prepared by program specialists without their general education and administrative counterparts.

The Full Service Planning Process

The Planning TEAM should begin the development of a Full Service delivery system by first reviewing in detail the mandates of PL 94-142, applicable state laws and State Department of Education regulations. (This process is essential as it serves as a basis from which nonspecial education personnel and others who may not be knowledgeable of the laws may more effectively provide input into the planning activities.)

Full services planning will encompass all services provided for handicapped children by a local education agency -- everything from childfind to instruction -- and will follow the steps outlined in Figure 1.

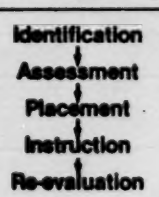
Figure 1.
Sequence of Activities of a
Full Service Planning Process Model



Development of Model Program Standards

The development of the Model program, which consists of a set of Program Standards, is a first step in the planning process. It is the Model program against which Current Practices will be measured. It is suggested that the planning group start with the Program Model presented in Figure 2.*

Figure 2.
Sequence of Activities Program Model



*This model is abstracted from The Prince William Model: A Planning Guide for the Development and Implementation of Full Services for All Handicapped Children (NASDSE, 1976).

The use of a Model to guide the planning process has the advantage of assisting the planning group in (1) understanding the scope of a Full Service Program, (2) developing program standards for all aspects of the system, and (3) visualizing, early in the planning process, what form the final product will take.

The primary tasks of the planning TEAM are to review and discuss each statement of the model and develop appropriate program standards based on what services they would like to see provided for all handicapped students.

Example of A Standard: An individualized plan for instructional and support services will be designed for each child determined eligible for special education services. (A Standard is an explicit statement of a specific level of acceptable performance; it reflects an expectation of what should be.)

Delineation of Program Elements

While program standards provide the framework for the development of an ideal program, they are insufficient in themselves to completely describe the desired program. In order for a district to better comprehend specific components of the more general program standards, it is suggested that program elements related to each standard be specified. (At this point the planning TEAM may wish to consider elements which exceed the minimal specifications of federal and state law, such as the development of an indentification program including children from birth through three years of age).

With reference to the previously mentioned standard on IEP development, the following are examples of some related Program Elements to be included in an IEP:

- a statement of educational strengths and measurable constraints;
- a description of the program model the child will follow in his/her daily and weekly schedule;

- a description of the nature and amount of support or auxiliary services to be provided;
- a schedule of meetings with parents or guardians and student, when appropriate, to review pupil progress.

Description of Current Practices

When the planning TEAM reaches consensus on the Program Elements of the model program, they are ready to develop a Description of the Current Special Education Program. This description should parallel the model program format and each element should have a correspeonding practice associated with it.

Current practices should be quantified whenever possible and should, at a minimum include the following data:

- total number of children served, by disability and by age
- number of children served by placement category (e.g. private school, institution, self-contained class, resource room, etc.)
- number of children awaiting assessment
- time required from referral to completion of assessment
- number of children awaiting IEP meetings
- time required from completion of assessment to IEP meeting
- numbers and types of teachers, support service personnel and volunteers
- class size by age, exceptionality and alternative

Analysis of Discrepancies

The next activity is the Analysis of Discrepancies between the real program and the model program. The goal of this activity is to: (1) develop clear statements of discrepancies between existing and desired services and (2) develop the best strategies possible to eliminate the discrepancies between existing and desired services.

The analysis of discrepancies activity can be broken into four separate but related subactivities or tasks. These tasks should be approached in the following order:

Step 1. Identification of Discrepancies

When current practices are measured against the model program, the differences reflected in the two statements are identified as discrepancies. Statements of discrepancy should be developed for each element in the list or real vs. ideal program model. (Figure 3 represents examples of recognized discrepancies in many special education service delivery systems.)

Figure 3. Examples of Discrepancies Between Models and Reality

MODEL PROGRAM	*Real Program*	*Discrepancies*
AWARENESS 1. The activities of the awareness system will emphasize: a. the nature of normal and exceptional child developmental patterns b. the need for early intervention c. the scope of special educational and related services available, the persons to contact regarding these services d. the right to a free and appropriate education 2. The awareness program will contact members of the medical community, specifically: pediatricians, obstetricians, ophthalmologists, orthopedists, optometrists, dentists, neurologists, general practitioners, otolaryngologists, psychiatrists, and other specialists.	1. Activities of the awareness system currently emphasize the services provided by the public school special education program for exceptional students. Activities stress the right to a free and appropriate education and the need for early intervention. Persons to contact regarding services are included. 2. The only contact with members of the medical community has been through referrals for specific diagnosis.	1. At the present time, awareness materials emphasizing normal development patterns are not used. 2. No strategies have been developed to reach the members of the medical community in an effective manner.
THE PLACEMENT PROCESS A. Placement Team 1. Membership a. Consultant from Central Office Exceptional Children (optional) b. Principal or designate as committee chairman c. Teachers and counselors who have been involved with the child	A. Placement Team 1. Membership a. Consultant from Central Office (Exceptional Children) always present and serves as committee chairman b. Principal c. Teachers/counselors when available	A. Placement Team 1. Membership a. At present, consultant has been acting as chairperson due to lack of definition of responsibilities of staff in placement process b. Principal does not serve as committee chairman c. Teachers and counselors are not always available

Step 2. Development of Needs Statements

Discrepancy statements should be converted into statements of need. These needs statements must be written in a form that can be solved.

CAUTION: It is predictable that in the development of statements of need there will be a tendency to create statements which provide a solution to the problem. For example, a discrepancy describing the assessment program might be stated, "Timely assessments are not conducted resulting in a backlog of 110 children awaiting assessment." The need statement might be developed, "There is a need to hire more psychologists." This is a solution and reflects jumping to conclusion without going through the problem solving process. A better statement would be. "There is a need to eliminate the backlog of 110 students awaiting assessment."

Step 3. Rank Ordering of Priorities

Review the list of needs statements and develop a priority ranking. During this analysis two things should become apparent: (1) There will be a considerable amount of overlapping among the needs expressed from different segments of the program, and (2) the total list of needs may be collapsed or grouped into areas such as policies, administrative systems and program activities. (The list of needs should be reduced in number as far as possible without losing individual needs, and the remaining list should be grouped into areas of need.)

Step 4. Generation of Alternative Strategies

Analyze each need and develop strategies to overcome it. In developing strategies to meet program needs, your planning TEAM should follow a strict problem solving method, rather than project only one solution, the TEAM should identify as many alternatives as possible for meeting a particular need.

Force Field Analysis of Alternative Strategies

Up to this point the input from the TEAM members should have been positive and constructive, related to descriptions of the ideal or the actual. The process of Force Field Analysis, however, includes the generation of both positive and negative forces associated with each alternative strategy. In order to complete a comprehensive force field analysis, each of the suggested alternatives should be discussed, with the TEAM members attending to the benefits and constraints associated with a particular alternative from their own perceptives. Items to be considered in this process should include:

- time factors
- cost factors
- personnel availability
- facility availability
- scheduling factors
- system responsivity and receptiveness to the idea
- locus of control

An Example of Force Field Analysis may be found in Figure 4.

Alternative 1—Develop IEPs With A Traveling Team

Forces For	*Forces Against*
1. Would take minimum time of building personnel	1. Really is an extension of current practice of central office teams 2. Would require new personnel and additional money 3. Little knowledge of child and family 4. Scheduling difficulty

Alternative 2—Develop IEPs with Teams at the Building Level

Forces For	*Forces Against*
1. Maximum knowledge of child and family 2. Scheduling could fit both parent and school needs 3. Places authority with responsibility 4. Would create more teams resulting in more responsive system	1. Requires inservice training 2. Not all placements are in building 3. Requires much time of building level personnel 4. May require funds for released time of building personnel

Selection and Recommendation

Once the most appropriate response has been determined for each statement

of need, the planning TEAM should review the selected alternatives as a whole, bearing in mind those factors which were considered during the initial selection procedure. While monetary or time constraints may not have been considered as highly negative factors in the initial Force Field Analysis, their cumulative effects may be a critical factor. Once an alternative has been decided upon, the TEAM should articulate the activities recommended to implement it, ascribing particular time, personnel and budgetary estimates.

Other planning activities which the TEAM should address include:

- presentation of recommendations in a straightforward manner including both short term objectives and long term goals for the district or educational service agency;
- suggested timelines for implementation;
- information pertaining to the impact of the recommendations, and;
- documentation of the actual planning process.

The TEAM should also develop strategies concerning how the report would be best presented, who should be involved, and the best timing for the presentation. While the TEAM may develop a comprehensive plan, in the final analysis the policy will be set by the school board. Inclusion of a board member in the planning TEAM will help to ensure that the plan will be given strong consideration.

Implementation

A well developed recommendation to the policy makers will contain all of the information necessary for proper implementation including personnel to be involved, timelines, facilities and materials to be utilized as well as other resources. Once the recommendations have been adopted, the policy for implementation is in place.

Evaluation

The Full Service model developed by the planning TEAM may be evaluated along a number of different Discrepancy Evaluation dimensions. Following implementation, current practices may again be described and discrepancies defined. Estimates on cost and personnel factors associated with the plan may be compared to actual figures. Suggested implementation timelines may be checked, re-evaluated and adjusted if necessary. Finally, the actual program content should be verified to determine if the program is really "What is best for the child."

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